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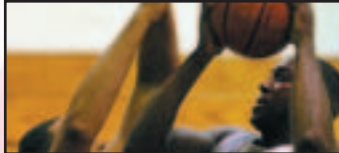
MARCH 10, 2006



Fightin' fires
with ARFF
A3



Whale Watching
off Waikiki
B1



Sports: Base
Hoops
C1

MCBH wins environmental awards

Environmental quality manage- ment programs recognized

Lance Cpl. Roger L. Nelson
Combat Correspondent

Every odd fiscal year, small- and nonindustrial installations compete for environmental awards in eight different categories, for the installation and

individual team awards.

For fiscal year 2005, Marine Corps Base Hawaii won first-place recognition in the Secretary of the Navy's award competition in three categories: Natural Resources Program Award for small instal-

lations, Natural Resources for individual representatives and the Environmental Quality Award for a small installation.

"We've won first place thus far in the SecNav award competition," said Dr. Diane C. Drigot, senior natural resource

management specialist, here." We await the outcome of the Department of Defense level competition."

According to Drigot, the winner of the DoD level award is likely to be announced in late March.

"The nomination process was self-nomination, and each military service and defense agency may submit one nomination for each of the eight award categories," said 57-year-

See Awards, A-7

People trafficking threatens security

Lance Cpl. Edward C. deBree

Combat Correspondent

Trafficking in persons can be explained as the act of forcing people into slave labor or sexual exploitation. People are forced into slave labor and work for no money and are abused constantly, but there are more aspects of TIP that are used to hurt the security of the United States and the Marine Corps.

According to the Department of State Web site, more than 300,000 children are used in more than 30 armed conflicts worldwide. Children are abducted and forced to serve as combatants for militia, but fighting is not the only thing children are used for.

Children are also used as porters, people who stand at the door to assist others in entering a building, as well as being used as servants, messengers, and even spies. Militias even use them to obtain intelligence against opposing forces.

While males are usually used to fight and gather intelligence from opposing forces, females are forced to marry or perform sexual acts for male combatants, which can lead to sexual abuse, pregnancy, and contraction of sexually transmitted diseases.

According to the United Nations Children's Fund, a majority of these children are between 15 and 18, but there have been cases where the children are as young as 7. This problem is greater in Africa and Asia, but South America, Eurasia and the Middle East also are guilty of TIP.

Another worldwide concern is the selling of people to perform slave labor and sexual acts. Some incidents of people becoming a victim of trafficking include being promised a job that offers good benefits and being sold by family members to get the family out of a debt.

When people are offered jobs in countries other than their own, the person who offered the job has to pay for them to be transported to that country. When the victim arrives, the person offering the job forces the victim into prostitution to payback the money that was spent to move them there.

Other instances which lead to individuals being sold involve people who work as house helpers. Oftentimes these helpers are abused and/or receive little food.

The commander-in-chief has issued a no tolerance policy toward trafficking in persons.



Sgt. Joe Lindsay

A Lava Dog from 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment appears to mummify himself while attempting to get some much-needed rest during a recent four-day battalion operation conducted in the mountainous area of the Pech River corridor in the Kunar Province of eastern Afghanistan.

1/3 conducts battalion op in Afghanistan

Sgt. Joe Lindsay

Combat Correspondent

NANGALAM, Afghanistan — The Lava Dogs of 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, based out of Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, recently conducted a battalion-wide operation in the often volatile region of the Pech River corridor between Camp Blessing in Nangalam and Camp Wright in Asadabad in the Kunar Province of eastern Afghanistan.

The operation, which resulted in the placement of approximately two dozen Anti-Coalition Militia and ACM collaborators in the status of personnel under control, included majority elements of the battalion's assets and was conducted in conjunction with U.S. Army, Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police forces, noted Capt. Thomas Kisch, company commander, Alpha Company, 1/3.

See 1/3, A-6

Arabic-speaking Marines prove valuable

Sgt. Monroe F. Seigle

Combat Correspondent

Two Marines from 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment will be deploying to Iraq later this month with valuable tools to fight the war on terror — the ability to read, speak and write the Arabic language.

Sgt. Mennen Suleiman, an assault section leader assigned to Weapons Company and Pfc. Elou Talballa, a rifleman from Lima Company, were both born in Arabic-speaking countries.

Suleiman, a native of Kirkuk, Iraq, said he knows how the people in Iraq have suffered under the oppression of Saddam Hussein's regime. He is a Christian and was criticized every day at school for not being Muslim. At 13, he moved to Omaha, Neb. with his father, mother, and his two sisters.

"I had to fight every day in school, because kids were taught that Christian people were the bottom of the barrel," said Suleiman, who is Assyrian-Aramaic. "My people were not even allowed to get birth certificates because the government did not want us to be able to hold a government job. You had to be a Sunni-Muslim to be considered for any good job."

Talballa was born in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. His father is Sudanese and his mother is Egyptian. He moved to the United States with his father when he was nine.

Recently, Suleiman and Taballa, who have been deployed to different countries in the Middle East to



SULEIMAN



TALBALLA

fight the Global War on Terrorism, proved how valuable their language skills are in a combat situation. The Marines bridged the communication gap during Mojave Viper, a month-long training exercise in the Mojave Desert.

There, Suleiman and Taballa effectively communicated with several Iraqi nationals who were role players in a mock Iraqi city.

Suleiman said he looks forward to returning to Iraq and assisting in weeding out the insurgents who threaten the lives of innocent Iraqi civilians. He also said he remembers, as a child, being pulled out of a classroom and being forced to hold up pictures of Hussein when he came through his city.

Talballa said he also looks forward to assisting with the communication barriers in Iraq.

"I decided to join the Marines, because I watched

the news one day and it was broadcasted that two American soldiers in Iraq were killed because there was a misunderstanding in communication," said Talballa. "I think that the United States has given me many opportunities and hope for a future. When I saw the news that day, I found a way to repay it by going into the Marines."

Many of Suleiman's and Talballa's seniors said they believe the Marines are going to be a valuable asset in their upcoming deployment.

"Suleiman has the skills to communicate with the leaders in the local communities," said Staff Sgt. Shane Conway, mortars section leader, Kilo Company, who works with Suleiman on a daily basis. "We will be able to get more info out of the local people with Suleiman's language skills. He is very valuable to us, not only because he speaks Arabic, but he is one of those Marines that are always trying to get the job done as soon and as proficiently as possible."

Although Suleiman said he looks forward to going to Iraq to assist with the Global War on Terrorism, putting his life on the line for his country will not be his only sacrifice. His wife Karen will give birth to their first baby while he is deployed.

"I am ready to go," said an eager Suleiman. "I will have several roles to fill in Iraq, but all I care about right now is the safety of my Marines. Communication out there is vital to mission

See Translators, A-7

3rd Radio Battalion welcomes home veterans

200-plus Marines return from 8-month deployment in Iraq

Cpl. Megan L. Stiner

Press Chief

Approximately 210 Marines assigned to 3rd Radio Battalion were welcomed home Feb. 27 by family, friends and fellow Marines, after returning from an eight-month deployment to Iraq.

"The Marines did a phenomenal job

over there," said Sgt. Maj. Larry P. Fineran, sergeant major, 3rd Radio Battalion. "We got a lot of bad guys off the street."

According to Fineran, an Odebolt, Iowa native, although the Marines were spread out over a 33,000-mile area, they performed their duties exceptionally well due to positive and experienced small unit leadership.

"Many of the Marines have been deployed two or three times prior to this last one," began Fineran, who joined the unit right before they deployed. "The sergeants and corporals really stepped up and took control. It was due to them taking charge that made everything run so smoothly."

Fineran said he was impressed with the tasks that members in his unit took on and accomplished.

"Some of the Marines supported infantry units," began the infantryman by trade. "There are some that went on more

than 500 combat patrols with the grunts."

He also stated that one of the best things that happened with the deployment was that everyone they set out with came home safely.

"The unit had such a successful deployment because they are a very squared away group of Marines," said Staff Sgt. Michael W. Stansfield, watch chief. "Everything I experienced was very organized."

Stansfield, a Palm Bay, Fla. native, was

See 3rd Radio, A-5

NEWS BRIEFS

Aloha Fair

A CG’s Community Aloha Fair and Information Forum will be held Tuesday at Kahuna’s Ballroom from 5 to 7 p.m. to explore the activities and services offered aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii and in the surrounding community. Numerous organization representatives from Marine Corps Community Services and the community will provide information and answer questions about the programs and services that they offer. Attendees will enjoy free pupus and exciting prize giveaways. For more information, call the MCCS Marketing Department at 254-7679.

Motorcycle Stand Down

March 16 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., speakers from Base Safety, the Honolulu Police Department, and Honolulu motorcycle dealerships will be at the Base Theater to address issues such as motorcycling excellence, traffic hot spots, safety maintenance and adjustments, and new products for motorcyclists. For more information, call 257-1830.

MADD Presentation

A multimedia presentation from Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) will be shown on March 20 at the Base Theater at 9:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., and 2:00 p.m. For more information, call 257-1830.

Registration open for SSWLS

The 2006 Sea Service Women’s Leadership Symposium, to be held March 21 at the Base Theater, is now open for registration. The event is open to all leaders.

The primary goals for SSWLS are to actively support the sea services in the retention and career development of women and leaders of women, be an essential element in maintaining operational readiness, provide professional development and mentoring, and support gender diversity.

To register visit www.sswls.org or call 1-866-462-2838.

MIA Remains Recovery

Anthropologists Dr. Elizabeth Goodman and Dr. Joan Baker will give a presentation at 1 p.m. at the Base Theater, March 23, that highlights their research efforts, which included expeditions to Southeast Asia and to an Iraq mass-burial site. Goodman and Baker are anthropologists for the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command located at Hickam Air Force Base. The event is open to all base personnel.

Annual Father-Daughter Dance

The seventh-annual Father-Daughter Dance will be held at the Officers’ Club Lanai Ballroom from 5:30 to 9 p.m., April 1. Tickets are \$13.50 per person and include bufet dinner, door prizes and entertainment. For tickets or more information, call the ASYMCA at 254-4719.

Road Work Continues

From now through March 17, traffic on Hawkins Street, Mokapu Road, Harris Ave. and Selden Street will be periodically interrupted between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. The roadways will undergo hot AC patchwork, mow strip completion, and curb, gutter, and sidewalk repair. One lane will be shut down at a time, when necessary to facilitate repairs. Point of contact for this matter is the Family Housing Tenant Relations Manager Andy Gasper who can be reached at 257-1257, ext. 287.

Important Phone Numbers:

On-Base Emergencies	911
Military Police	257-7114
Child Protective Service	832-5300
Fraud, Waste, Abuse & EEO	257-8852
Business Management Hotline	257-3188
Pothole & Streetlight Repair	257-2380
Base Information	449-7110
MCBH Duty Chaplain	257-7700

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The do’s and dont’s of saluting

Lance Cpl. Edward C. deBree

Combat Correspondent

Saluting can be traced back the Middle Ages. Knights in armor, raised their helmet visors in recognition and a man always made a gesture of friendliness by raising his right hand, according to the Marine Corps “Student Handbook BOG8205Z,” Training Command, Basic School.

Today, although saluting is one custom and courtesy the military services still uphold, there are guidelines as to when to salute officers, colors and standards not cased.

All service members are required to salute the American flag or the “colors.” This means that when morning and evening colors is hoisted and lowered and the national anthem is played, service members, in uniform, are to come to the position of attention, face toward the flag and salute. If the flag is not visible, face toward the direction of the music. The salute is held until the last note of the national anthem is played and remain at attention until “carry on” is sounded, which are the final notes of the bugle. If service members are in a formation, they are halted, brought to attention and the person in charge of the formation salutes for

the formation.

When driving a vehicle on base, service members must stop their vehicle and stay seated at attention. Civilians must also stop their vehicle until morning and evening colors has been completed. If the service member is in civilian clothing, he or she must stand at attention, remove any headgear and place it over his or her heart, or if no headgear is worn, then he or she places the right hand over his or her heart.

Enlisted service members are required to salute all officers, as stated by the 10th General Order. When approaching an officer, service members should initiate their salute six paces from the officer. They can also salute from up to 30 paces away. When approaching an officer from behind, service members overtaking the officer must give the proper greeting followed by, “by your leave, sir or ma’am,” and salute.

Service members walking on base are also required to salute officers who are driving in a vehicle. The officer’s vehicle is identified by a blue sticker on the windshield.

Other personnel service members should salute include the president and vice president of the United States, state governors, Secretary of Defense, Deputy Secretary of Defense, senators and congressmen, and the

secretaries and assistant secretaries of the Army, Navy and Air Force. People holding positions within foreign governments should be saluted, if the United States formally recognizes their government. These include heads of states, ambassadors, ministers of defense, and defense leaders at the same level as the assistant secretary of the Army, Navy and Air Force.

To report to an officer, service members approach the officer, stop two paces in front of the officer, salute, give the proper greeting and then report. After reporting, wait for a response, salute take one step back, about face and walk away. A salute is not required if reporting is done inside a building or under a covered area.

There are certain situations when saluting is not required. These situations include: if the service member is indoors; engaged in routine work when a salute will interfere with the work; in the middle of a physical activity or a social function; in a work detail or formation; in a church, theater or public conveyance; when the uniform blouse or coat is unbuttoned; while smoking or carrying anything in the right hand that cannot be transferred to the left hand; in a non-salute area; and within the sight of enemy forces.

Marine Corps Medical system being revamped

Lance Cpl. Joel Abshier

2nd Marine Logistics Group

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C.

Many Marines have had the unfortunate situation of having their medical or dental records lost which ultimately results in more shots, checkups, and the hassle of redoing everything before a deployment.

Fortunately for service members within 2nd Marine Logistics Group, there is a new process called the Medical Readiness Reporting System being taught to hospital corpsmen to monitor, update and report all medical data to a localized system here March 6 to 8.

“The bottom line is you will all make an impact using this program,” Petty Officer 1st Class Lee Saucedo, MRRS instructor, explained to a class full of corpsmen. “After you all learn this program, you will eventually teach it to other corpsmen back at your unit.”

Corpsmen within 2nd MLG attended the classes and will pass their knowledge on to other corpsmen and Marines. Ultimately Marines are responsible for ensuring the information is up to date when given to the corpsmen to input into the MRRS.

Once the section or units’ respective corpsman obtain the medical information on the Marines he or she works with, he or she will then place it into the system for further use down the road.

In 2005, the medical officer of the Marine Corps authorized the use of MRRS for medical readiness reporting for the entire Marine Corps, according

to Navy Lt. Carl W. Doud, preventive medicine officer with 2nd Medical Battalion, 2nd MLG. The system will aid in accurate reporting of medical readiness for Marines and make data accessible to all those in the chain of command all the way up to the commanding general and Headquarters Marine Corps, he said.

The old data system, Shipboard Medical System, was not a user-friendly program and did not have the capability to transfer its information to other online databases, according to Doud.

“With MRRS, anyone with a login can access files from any computer that is connected to the Internet,” said Petty Officer 3rd Class Rodrigo A. Hernandez, a hospital corpsman with 2nd Transportation Support Battalion, 2nd MLG. If we ever lose a record, we can simply pull it up on the screen and figure out what the service member needs done, he said.

The 2nd MLG is changing their systems prior to any other unit within II Marine Expeditionary Force, according to Doud. The entire II MEF will follow in May.

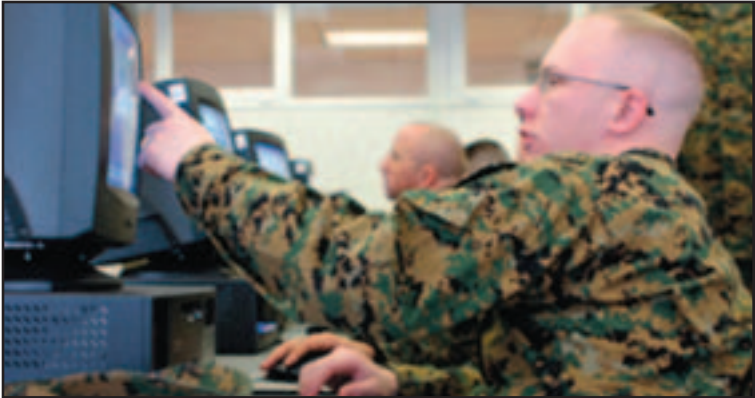
“MRRS will provide access to all Marine medical data via a Web-based, real-time system with a centralized database and graphical user interface,” Doud said. “It will be a useful tool to measure, monitor and improve overall deployment readiness.”

Although the system is still new to 2nd MLG, it is already in the process of becoming the default program of use, according to Saucedo. “Eventually this system will touch every Marine in the Corps.”



Lance Cpl. Joel Abshier

Petty Officer 1st Class Lee Saucedo instructs other corpsmen about a new medical system at Camp Lejeune, N.C. A new process called Medical Readiness Reporting System is being integrated to help monitor, update and report all medical data to a localized system. Saucedo is an MRRS instructor with Marine Forces, Headquarters Command.



Lance Cpl. Joel Abshier

Navy hospital corpsmen learn about a new system at Camp Lejeune, N.C., that will keep medical records close at hand.

Weekend weather outlook

Today



Day — Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms. Southeast winds around 15 mph. Chance of rain, 50 percent.

Night — Partly cloudy with scattered showers. East winds around 15 mph. Chance of rain, 50 percent.

High — 78-80
Low — 64-70

Saturday



Day — Partly cloudy with numerous showers. East winds around 15 mph. Chance of rain, 20 percent.

Night — Partly cloudy with scattered showers. East winds around 15 mph. Chance of rain, 50 percent.

High — 78-80
Low — 64-70

Sunday



Day — Partly cloudy with scattered showers. East winds around 15 mph. Chance of rain, 40 percent.

Night — Partly cloudy with scattered showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph. Chance of rain, 50 percent.

High — 78-82
Low — 64-70



Lance Cpl. Clint J. Gilbert, handline man, Air Rescue and Fire Fighter, Marine Corps Air Facility, Lance Cpl. Walter K. Moore, backup man, ARFF, MCAF, and Lance Cpl. Timothy B. Morris, safety/rescue, ARFF, MCAF, attack a simulated fire at Westfield, March 2.

Inferno Scenario

Marines undergo fire training

Story and Photos by Lance Cpl. Roger L. Nelson
Combat Correspondent

As the adage goes, “Practice makes perfect.” Marines assigned to Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighter, Marine Corps Air Facility here, proved this with their fire simulation training at Westfield, March 2.

“We do this training anytime we get a chance,” said Staff Sgt. William B. McCormick, section leader, ARFF, MCAF. “We try to do it as much as possible. Ninety-nine percent of the time we’re training, so every time we get 30 minutes to train, we’ll come out and do some kind of training like this. We use every minute of the day.”

According to McCormick, the training simulated an aircraft fire and taught the Marines what to do in that scenario.

“We’ll go through all the procedures, from start to finish, needed to put the fire out on the bird,” said 27-year-old McCormick. “The training really shows how well we all work together.”

During this training, the three fire trucks rushed to a burning plane — with orange cones on it to simulate flames. Once at the plane, Marines inside the truck sprayed water on the plane knocking over the cones (putting out the fire). Fire fighters, dressed in fire protection suits, rushed up to the plane with hoses, putting out any flames that may not have been put out by the truck and



Lance Cpl. Sam D. Veron, turret man, sprays a simulated fire from the turret of a P-19 during Air Rescue and Fire Fighting training held at Westfield, here.

turret.

McCormick said he thinks the training is very effective.

“I’ve seen the training be put to use and it is well worth it,” said McCormick, a Big Stone Gap, Va. native. “Although in a real-life scenario, the element of surprise is always there, but consistent repetitiveness keeps the Marines prepared in case the real deal occurs. A lot of stuff changes in a real scenario.”

Sgt. Fabian I. Long, tanker driver/operator, ARFF, MCAF, said the hardest part of the training is the lack of the surprise.

“It’s hard trying to make the simulation training as realistic as possible,” said Long. “Also, they’re (the trainees) not surprised; they know exactly what’s going to happen and when.”

For the most part, Marines like the training because it’s what they’re trained to do, said 24-year-old Long.

“I love this training,” said Lance Cpl. Sam. D. Veron, turret

man, ARFF, MCAF. “Any kind of training that will help with our job is awesome. It’s good because we get to keep up everything we’ve been taught.”

Long said the training is very safe and are no real threats to the Marines’ safety.

“The training is where we have to make our mistakes, because we’re able to make corrections,” said Long, a St. Petersburg, Fla. native. “It’s good to work out all of the kinks during training so you have no problems in a real-life scenario.”

McCormick explained that even though Marines from ARFF are rarely called upon to fight fires, they’re still dedicated.

“These Marines will do anything to finish the mission and get the job done,” said McCormick. “They’ll put their own lives in danger to save the lives of others. That’s our primary mission, to save lives. We all would give our lives to save another.”



Above: A 2.5-inch fire hose dispenses water from a P-19 truck, which holds up to 1,000 gallons of water.

Left: Lance Cpl. Timothy B. Morris, safety/rescue, Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighter, Maine Corps Air Facility, dresses down after attacking a simulated fire at Westfield.

Right: Cpl. Daniel J. Welkley, Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighter, Maine Corps Air Facility, and Cpl. Travis B. Franksen, crew chief, ARFF, MCAF, resupply the P-26 water tanker with fire fighting hose.





Photos by Sgt. Joe Lindsay

Above: Staff Sgt. Jose Dixon, mess chief for Camp Wright, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, from Granite City, Ill., poses for a photo in front of “Dixon’s Kitchen” aboard Camp Wright near Asadabad, Afghanistan.

Left: Staff Sgt. Jose Dixon, mess chief for Camp Wright, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, from Granite City, Ill. poses for a group photo in front of the Camp Wright Dining Facility, better known as “Dixon’s Kitchen.” Lance Cpl. Jason Barton (left), a food service specialist from Peoria, Ill. and Cpl. Alberto Hernandez, a chief cook from Philadelphia are also pictured along with members of their Afghan mess crew. Camp Wright is located near the town of Asadabad in the Kunar Province of eastern Afghanistan, where Dixon is deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Home-style cookin’ away from home

Sgt. Joe Lindsay
Combat Correspondent

ASADABAD, Afghanistan — A warrior can have all the weapons, ammunition, and high-tech equipment modern technology can provide, but there has been one constant throughout the history of warfare that has not changed – a warrior must eat.

It was true for the legions led by Alexander The Great, for the Romans, the Spartans, Napoleon’s armies, and it remains as true today as it ever was. But, it is arguably a safe bet that few, if any, have eaten as well during a war as the Marines from 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment who are currently stationed at Camp Wright in Asadabad, Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The reason is a simple and as complicated as two words: Dixon’s Kitchen.

“We eat our share of MREs (meals ready to eat) out in the field, but after missions, when we are regrouping at Camp Wright, it is a huge morale boost to sit down in Dixon’s Kitchen for a four-course meal,” said Sgt. Michael Valora, a machine-gunner by trade currently serving as a section leader, Combined Anti-Armor Team, Weapons Company, 1/3. “It’s not just the best food I’ve ever eaten in the Marine Corps, it’s some of the best food I’ve ever eaten, period. Don’t tell my wife I said that.”

Indeed, some would say describing Dixon’s Kitchen as merely the dining facility or chow hall aboard Camp Wright would be doing it a grave injustice.

“It’s more like a restaurant than a chow hall,” said Staff Sgt. Robert Gordon, battalion ammunition chief, 1/3, and a native of Brooklyn, N.Y. “I never expected to eat like this out here in Afghanistan.”

Dixon’s Kitchen is the brainchild of Staff Sgt. Jose Dixon, mess chief for Camp Wright, 1/3. And though there is still argument over who exactly came up with the name, one point nobody seems to be arguing about is the quality of the meals Marines are eating aboard Camp Wright.

“When you are out there fighting the enemy, you’re cold, you’re tired, and you’re living off MREs,” said Lance Cpl. Daniel Timmons, rifleman, 1st Squad, 3rd Platoon, Charlie Company, 1/3. “When we are rolling back to base after an op (operation) everyone is always talking about Dixon’s Kitchen, and how much they can’t wait to get their grub on. Staff Sergeant Dixon really goes the extra mile to support the Marines,” admitted the Acworth, Ga. native.

For his part, Dixon said he doesn’t believe he should be singled out for all the praise.

“Dixon’s Kitchen, as everyone started calling it, is a team effort,” said Dixon, a native of Granite City, Ill. “I am just one piece of the puzzle. We’ve got a dozen Afghan nationals working in the kitchen as well as two highly-motivated Marines who deserve every bit of the credit that seems to be coming my way. Trust me, none of this would be possible without teamwork.”

Part of the success of Dixon’s Kitchen, according to Dixon himself, is that he and his staff listen to their patrons.

“We have a board up where Marines can write suggestions,

such as what types of meals they would like or how they would like meals prepared,” said Dixon. “We listen to the Marines. They are the ones eating the food, and they should have a say in what they eat and how it is prepared. For instance, say we are having fried catfish one night. If enough Marines say they prefer it sautéed with more spices, we’ll go sauté up a batch. No big deal. We try to accommodate them as much as is humanly possible, and the feedback, no pun intended, has been terrific.”

“At most chow halls you just stick out your tray and the food gets slopped down on it and you eat it and that is that,” said Lance Cpl. Carlos Johnson, a motor transportation operator, 1/3, from Atlanta. “At Dixon’s Kitchen it’s more like they serve you. They really make you feel like you are important, that you matter. I might be just a lance corporal, but when I go into Dixon’s Kitchen, I’m treated like a king.”

“Things like that go along way to keeping our spirits up out here,” added Lance Cpl. William Duffield, a rifleman by trade currently serving as a clerk for Charlie Company, 1/3. “We all miss our families, but eating at Dixon’s Kitchen takes me home, mentally. It feels like I’m getting a home cooked meal. I can’t say enough about how much what they are doing to take care of the Marines means to us all here,” admitted the Ridgway, Pa. native.

The seemingly endless accolades heaped on Dixon and his staff probably would have seemed a little far fetched to a man who joined the Marine Corps on a dare from his brother 15 years ago.

“My older brother Glenn was a Marine in the late 1980s and early ‘90s,” said Dixon, a 1990 graduate of Granite City High School. “He told me I wasn’t strong enough and wouldn’t be able to hack it as a Marine, and said I was too weak to make it through boot camp. He literally dared me to join.”

“We’ll, I took that dare and here I am, almost 16-years later,” said Dixon, glancing over his shoulder to the Dixon’s Kitchen sign that adorns the Camp Wright Dining Facility, though it is likely nobody has ever called it that. “Dixon’s Kitchen. Man, I like the sound of that.”

But what Dixon said he likes the sound of more than anything is the laughter of his children, Cruz, 10, and Josef, 2, when they are playing back at 1/3’s home base of Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay.

“Without a doubt, the hardest part of being a Marine is being separated from your family for long stretches at a time,” said Dixon. “I am so fortunate that my wife, Angelita, is such a strong woman. She is due to give birth to our first daughter any

“I think it is his passion not only for his job, but his passion to see the Marines who are putting their lives on the line every day out here get the best possible meals and service. The harsh reality out here is that every meal a Marine eats could be his last. Nobody likes to think that way, but it is the truth.”

day now. Our baby’s name is going to be Leilani. I can’t wait to get home and see her for the first time after we’ve accomplished our mission over here.”

The Dixon’s are no strangers to separation. Dixon served in the Gulf War in 1991 and also served during Operation Iraq Freedom.

“Two weeks after Josef was born, I deployed to Iraq for the second time,” said Dixon. “I was fortunate to be able to be there for his birth. Not so with Leilani, but missing the birth of a child just comes with the territory of being a Marine. I’m not the only one from 1/3 who’s going through it on this deployment to Afghanistan. And besides, it is our wives that deserve the credit. Not us. They are the real heroes.”

According to those who work with Dixon, he is the type of Marine who does not merely excel at his military occupational specialty (MOS), but rather is passionate about it, and the Marines he supports, in every way.

“I think it is his passion not only for his job, but his passion to see the Marines who are putting their lives on the line every day out here get the best possible meals and service,” said Cpl. Alberto Hernandez, chief cook for Camp Wright, 1/3. “The harsh reality out here is that every meal a Marine eats could be his last. Nobody likes to think that way, but it is the truth.”

“The whole purpose of every single MOS in the Marine Corps, I don’t care what it is, is to support the grunts (infantry Marines),” continued the Philadelphia native. “Some people lose sight of that. Staff Sergeant Dixon never does.”

It is that mentality, perhaps, that leads Dixon to push his Marines, and himself, to the limit, noted Lance Cpl. Jason Barton, food service specialist for Camp Wright, 1/3.

“There is a price to pay for the way Staff Sergeant Dixon runs Dixon’s Kitchen, and that price is no sleep,” said Barton, a native of Peoria, Ill. “We work from 0530 (5:30 a.m.) until midnight, and Staff Sergeant Dixon is up before us and hits the rack after us. We may serve three meals a day, but Staff Sergeant Dixon keeps Dixon’s Kitchen open 24 hours a day, stocked with snacks and drinks so that Marines who might have missed a meal for whatever reason always can grab something to eat.”

“Staff Sergeant Dixon is a pretty strict Staff NCO, but he is not a ‘my way or the highway’ type Marine,” continued Barton. “He is always open to suggestions and is always looking for ways to improve not only himself, but also the way we operate. He might be hard on us, but at the end of the day, he explains to us why he was hard on us. He just wants us to be the best Marines we can possibly be, and he wants Dixon’s Kitchen to be the best place for Marines to eat that it can possibly be.”

Marine answers second call to duty

Sgt. Joe Lindsay
Combat Correspondent

NANGALAM, Afghanistan — The first time he heard the call to duty, he said it was something he felt he needed to do. A little voice telling him that it was his duty as an American to serve his country – especially after it had been attacked. He reasoned his country rated four years of his life – now more than ever.

It was November 2001, just two months after September 11, when he said the little voice, or conscious as some would call it, led him to walk into the local recruiting office near him home in Littleton, Colo., and enlist as a rifleman in the United States Marine Corps.

From that moment, it was only a matter of time until he found himself on the front lines of the Global War on Terrorism in Iraq. It was the reason why, he said, he joined in the first place, and it came as no surprise.

What did come as a surprise was the shrapnel ripping into his shoulder and the bullet entering his upper leg. He'd been wounded twice, within seconds, or minutes, or hours of each other – he said he could no longer recall. All he recalled was that he had to keep sending rounds down range to protect his buddies, at least nine of whom were in a state at least as bad as his own, or worse.

For his actions that day in Fallujah, Iraq, while a fire team leader for 1st Platoon, Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, Sgt. Brent Wright, currently a platoon guide for 3rd Platoon, Charlie Company, 1/3, was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with combat distinguishing device.

The award, in part, reads: “For heroic achievement while serving as fire team leader ... in support of Iraqi Freedom II on 13 November 2004. Corporal Wright’s leadership, tactical ability and fierce fighting spirit contributed substantially to unit success during Operation Al Fajr, the attack on the city of Al Fallujah, Iraq. While conducting clearing operations ... his squad became engaged in a ferocious fire fight with insurgent forces barricaded on the second floor of a house. Ignoring a gunshot wound to his leg and with complete disregard for his own safety, Corporal Wright repeatedly maneuvered through enemy machine-gun and small-arms fire to assist in the evacuation and treatment of casualties.”

“Those Marines who were wounded that day might not be with us now, if it wasn’t for Sergeant Wright’s actions,” said Lance Cpl. Justin Snyder, a squad automatic weapon gunner and 2nd fire team leader, 2nd Squad, 3rd Platoon, 1/3, who received the Purple Heart for wounds he sustained as a rifleman while serving with Wright in Iraq. “Marines like Sergeant Wright are the types of leaders that make sure their boys don’t come home in a box. He’d have given his life for any one of his Marines, in a heartbeat, if it meant they would make it home safely,” admitted the Las Vegas, Nev. native.

Arguably, it is that attitude described by Snyder that made Wright hear the call to serve his country in battle once again, this time in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

“Oh, he heard the call alright,” said Sgt. Michael Chambers, platoon sergeant, 3rd Platoon, Charlie Company, 1/3. “He heard the call loud and clear.”

That’s because the call came this time not from a little voice inside his head, but rather



Sgt. Joe Lindsay

Sgt. Brent Wright, platoon guide, 3rd Platoon, Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment stands momentarily in front of an Afghan "jingle truck" before embarking on a mission in the Kunar Province of eastern Afghanistan. Wright, a native of Littleton, Colo., had been on terminal leave for 52 days when his platoon sergeant, Sgt. Michael Chambers (background), from Lexington, S.C., called him on the phone and asked Wright to extend so he could deploy with 1/3 to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

from a loud, monotonous ring. It was the sound of a telephone.

“I was on my 50-second day of terminal leave back home in Colorado when the phone rang,” said Wright. “It was Sergeant. Chambers. Before he even had a chance to say anything, I asked him, ‘Where are you headed?’ He said, ‘Afghanistan. We need you brother.’”

And with that, Wright put his plans of enrolling in college on hold, went down once again to the local Marine Corps recruiting office where he had first joined four years earlier, got the necessary paperwork for contract extensions, and faxed them to the career planner at 1/3’s home duty station of Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay. Two days later, Wright reported for duty in Hawaii. A little more than a month after that, he was stepping off a plane once again into a combat zone – this time in Afghanistan.

“You don’t really know what a Marine is made of until the time of reckoning comes,” said Chambers, who served with Wright in

ing to kill them.”

“Well, I know what kind of Marine Sergeant Wright is,” continued the Lexington, S.C. native. “I saw with my own eyes what he did over there in Fallujah. I saw him care more about his own guys than himself. That’s what being a real Marine is all about.”

“He was free and clear of his military obligations,” added Chambers, shaking his head as if grasping for the first time the ramifications of his phone call to Wright as he peered out into the darkness over the wire separating the Marines’ forward operating base at Camp Blessing from the insurgents who roam the mountains. “He had plans. He had a life. But when I told him we needed him, I meant it. Sergeant Wright being here means more of us are going to make it home alive while still accomplishing the mission we were given. If I thought anything less was at stake I never would have called him.”

One thing seems certain – the Marines of Charlie Company are glad he did and none more so than the ones who served with

“I saw with my own eyes what he did over there in Fallujah. I saw him care more about his own guys than himself. That’s what being a real Marine is all about.”

Iraq and was himself awarded the Bronze Star with combat distinguishing device for heroism in Fallujah, to go along with a Purple Heart. “I don’t care how squared away a Marine is in the rear. Even my own guys, no matter how good I think they are in training, you never really know what they’re made of until they got bullets whizzing past their heads, mortars landing at their feet, and they’re face to face with someone who is try-

ing to kill them.”

“I’ve been shot at with Sergeant Wright in Afghanistan, and I’ve been shot at with Sergeant Wright in Iraq,” said Lance Cpl. Jose Romero, a rifleman and 2nd fire team leader, 1st Squad, 3rd Platoon, Charlie Company, 1/3. “We’ve been through some crazy stuff together. Stuff I didn’t think we’d make it through. There is a bond among Marines that can only be formed under fire. There is

a loyalty that develops that is beyond what words can describe. That’s what the Marine Corps is all about – a brotherhood. When we heard he was coming back to serve with us in Afghanistan, it was a morale boost for all the guys in Charlie Company. All of us were moved by his sense of sacrifice.”

That may have been so, but Romero was quick to point out that it was no honeymoon reunion.

“Sergeant Wright don’t mess around,” chuckled Romero, a La Mirada, Calif., native. “We might have hugged him and shook his hand and smiled when we saw him first come back and all that, but about a minute later he was on us again.

“He is one of the strictest disciplinarians and no-nonsense Marines I’ve ever met,” continued Romero. “His discipline isn’t about mind games or doing stuff for the sake of doing it to show who is boss or any fake leadership stuff like that – even boot Marines can see through that style in a second. Everything he has us do has a purpose, and we respect him because he does it right along with us. He refuses to let us get complacent, because he knows complacency can kill you in war.”

Lance Cpl. Jason Smith, a rifleman and 3rd fire team leader, 2nd Squad, Charlie Company, 1/3, said he couldn’t agree more.

“Sargean Wright makes sure you know what you are doing, and you can’t fake the funk with him because he knows everything that goes along with being a grunt (infantry Marine),” said Smith, an Iraq veteran who served with Wright in Fallujah. “I was scared of him when I first joined the unit, because he looks like he’s made out of bricks and he’s got a permanent scowl on his face. He’s not mean-spirited, he’s just intense – about the Marine Corps, about his Marines and about killing those who are trying to kill his Marines,” admitted the Salem, Ore. native.

For his part, Wright said he was honed in the greatest possible school of infantry.

“I consider myself very fortunate to have spent my entire career with the Lava Dogs of 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment,” said Wright. “Anyone who knows me knows I don’t kiss butt – to anyone – so they know I am sincere when I say from the battalion commander on down to the company commanders, platoon commanders and platoon sergeants, the success of this battalion is a direct result of leadership by example.

“All I have ever done in my Marine Corps career has been to follow the leadership example set to me by my superiors,” said Wright. “I expect the same of the Marines under me – that they follow my example.

“All Marines have a huge responsibility to always set the example – from officers down to enlisted fire team leaders,” continued Wright. “I am a firm believer that every Marine needs to mentally prepare himself for a leadership role. There is a saying in the Marine Corps – ‘one bullet away.’”

“Every Marine is just one bullet away from being thrust into a leadership position. Marines need to be ready for that. Leadership is why 1/3 was so successful in Iraq and why we continue to be successful here in Afghanistan. It’s also why the Marine Corps has been so successful for 230 years. We’re the only service that truly gives vital leadership roles at the tactical level to lance corporals and lieutenants, which sets them up for success as they move up in the Corps. They know what it’s like to have the responsibility of others’ lives in their hands, and they respond – like Marines.”

3rd Radio, From A-1

an augment to the unit, and joined them nearly four months after 3rd Radio Battalion arrived in Iraq.

“I saw a lot of positive things come from the Marines of 3rd Radio Battalion,” said Stansfield. “By the time I got out there, they had the ball rolling. In the end, the mission was a complete success.”





Sgt. Joe Lindsay

Two Lava Dogs from 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment attempt to get some much-needed rest under their ponchos during a recent four-day battalion operation conducted in the mountainous area of the Pech River corridor in the Kunar Province of eastern Afghanistan.

1/3, From A-1

“Elements of the entire battalion were involved in this four-day operation,” said Kisch, a native of St. Louis Park, Minn. “The battalion operation was designed to go into certain villages in the Kunar Province and locate enemy forces that have been known to operate in this area. The ACM has been intimidating villagers and has been forcing the villagers to let the ACM use their villages as safe havens.

“The area along the Pech River Road, which connects Camp Blessing to Camp Wright, has been the site of numerous IED (improvised explosive device) placements by the enemy,” continued Kisch, who, in addition to his duties as a company commander for Alpha Company, recently took over as the Camp Blessing officer-in-charge. “We went out to put a stop to it and to disrupt these IED cells while showing the people of the villages that we support them.”

According to Lt. Col. James Bierman, commanding officer, 1/3, a proactive stance in Afghanistan is vital for the success of the mission.

“The fight is outside the wire,” said Bierman, a Virginia native and graduate of the Virginia Military Institute. “We’re going to win this war by being outside the wire, being aggressive and proactive, meeting with the Afghan people, establishing relationships with them and engaging with their leaders

and taking the fight to the enemy.”

There is little argument that 1/3 did just that with this latest operation, noted Staff Sgt. David Tomlinson, infantry platoon sergeant, 1st Platoon, Charlie Company, 1/3.

“This battalion operation took the fight to the enemy,” said Tomlinson, a Philadelphia native. “We let the ACM know how involved we can get, if need be, when we roll out there with the amount of Marines that we did. It draws a lot of attention, that’s for sure.”

According to 1st Lt. Jerome Greco, executive officer, Charlie Company, 1/3, that attention is a positive thing.

“The people of these villages see that we are out here to support them,” said Greco, a native of Morrestown, N.J. “Since we have arrived in Afghanistan, there has been in noticeable shift in the attitude of the locals towards us. They are more forthcoming with information about where the ACM is and what they are doing.”

“In the past, villagers were scared because the insurgents would threaten to kill them if they helped us, but now, especially when they see such a large force being so proactive, they realize that the ACM cannot compete with the Marines and the coalition,” continued Greco. “It makes them less afraid of the insurgents, because they know that we are here to protect them. The average Afghan villager trusts the coalition and they recognize we don’t mean

them any harm, and we are only here to rid their country of the insurgents and to help Afghanistan remain a free and democratic country.”

According to Capt. Jared Spurlock, company commander, Charlie Company, 1/3, joint operations are critical for long-term success in Afghanistan.

“It is very important we work in conjunction with the ANA and ANP,” said Spurlock, a native of Pocatello, Idaho. “It’s their country. We are here to support them. There is still a hostile ACM out there, and we are supporting the ANA and ANP while they build their confidence to conduct operations.

“The enemy’s main method of operation is through ambushes and IED’s,” continued Spurlock. “They know they don’t have the firepower, tactics or techniques to go toe-to-toe with the coalition forces, so they get as far away from us as they can in an attempt to avoid having to engage with us.”

That ACM trait was perhaps never more evident than during the battalion operation.

“I think the ACM are cowards,” said Staff Sgt. Robert Lytle, infantry platoon sergeant, Distributed Operations Platoon, 1/3. “They are not going to come anywhere near where they know Marines are. We didn’t receive any enemy contact during the battalion operation. Nobody shot at us, no IED’s,

no nothing as far as them trying to disrupt us. To me, that makes it an even more successful mission. It shows that the ACM can do nothing but hide when we are conducting an operation of this magnitude.”

“The mission was successful for a lot of reasons,” continued Lytle, a native of Asheville, N.C. “For starters, we PUC’d (placed personnel under control) a couple dozen ACM and those who would help the ACM. That helps us gather intelligence for future operations. Also, a lot of these fighters have been coming down from the mountains and turning in their weapons since the battalion operation.

“This show of force on the battalion operation showed them that they really don’t have a chance, and I think it got to them, mentally,” continued Lytle. “It made them realize they were fighting a losing battle. But most importantly, I think the battalion operation showed the villagers that we won’t just stand by while the ACM intimidates and threatens them.”

According to many who took part in the battalion operation, the villagers appeared to be overjoyed at the Marine and coalition presence.

“The villagers loved us and were overjoyed to see us in such large numbers,” said Cpl. Benjamin Herring, radio operator, Combined Anti-Armor Team-2, Weapons Company, 1/3. “Just that tells you right there that not only this mission, but our overall mission in

Afghanistan is a success.

“The villagers came out and greeted us, gave us information on the bad guys and offered us tea and food everywhere we went,” continued Herring, a native of Harding, Pa. “That just shows that they are not afraid of the ACM like they were in the past. They know the coalition forces are their friends and that we are here to get rid of the bad guys. They want that as much as we do.”

Staff Sgt. Andrew Giermann, a scout sniper platoon sergeant with 1/3, said he couldn’t agree more.

“The battalion operation was a show of force that conveyed to the enemy, in no uncertain terms, that we as a coalition are not afraid to maneuver wherever and whenever we want,” said Giermann, a native of Bloomington, Ill. “We are not in Afghanistan to conquer or seize land, but the battalion operation showed that we can take control of any enemy insurgent area any time we want. All the ACM can do is run and hide, which is what they did during the battalion op.

“That doesn’t go unnoticed by the villagers,” continued Giermann. “The villagers know that they don’t have to be intimidated by the ACM anymore. They know who is winning this war, and that it is only a matter of time until the ACM insurgent pockets that remain either reconcile, surrender, or are completely wiped out.”

Awards, From A-1

old Drigot. “The nominee must enter no later than eight weeks prior to the date of the awards ceremony.”

Categories in the installation group consist of Natural Resources Conservation, Cultural Resources Management, Environmental Quality, Pollution Prevention and Environmental Restoration. The team and individual awards categories are Natural Resource Conservation, Environmental Quality and Environmental Restoration.

“After an internal evaluation by relevant staff is made of installation achievements against award criteria in each category, eligible nominations are prepared,” said Drigot. “Nominations are screened and judged by a panel of judges from government, non-governmental organizations, academia, and the private sector evaluates the nominations. Successful award winners at the SevNav level are then resubmitted to compete at the DoD level against the successful nominees from in the other services.”

Drigot explained that there is different criteria a nominee must have before being able to receive an award.

The general criteria, consists of program management, technical merit, orientation to mission, transferability and stakeholder interaction.

“The judges decided, up to the SecNav level, that MCBH had the best match of programs and individual performance against the award criteria to be considered number one in the competition,” said the Chicago, Ill. native. “We still await the outcome of the DoD level competition.”

Drigot said she thinks the winning of the awards helps validate MCBH as having one of the best natural resources and environmental quality management programs in the country.

“We actually just found out about the SecNav level competition within the past two weeks,” Drigot said. “The award was supported by a lot of internal units, outside regulatory agencies, and the public who participates in various aspects.”

The winner of the SecNav level award will receive a plaque and the overall DoD winner receives a trophy.

“MCBH has won the award many times since 1970, when the award competition was first started by the DoD,” said Drigot. “It’s always a privilege and an honor to help represent the best of what MCBH is all about in national competitions.

“I welcome outside critiques to peer review our program and individual accomplishments. It helps motivate you to strive for excellence. It builds self confidence and is a way to give back to the community supporters on and off base who usually contribute to the excellence of the program so everyone can glow in the halo of being recognized by others.”

Translators, From A-1

accomplishment, and it can save lives.”

Talballa could not agree more with the fact that communication can save lives on the battlefield.

“I want to explain to the Iraqis why we are there,” said Talballa. “They will listen to

me because I am of Arabic descent, and I can speak their language. I feel I can prevent some of the dangerous situations that Marines are faced with every day.”

Both of the bilingual Marines said that their communication skills can be used in more situations than just in

combat. The Marines also want to talk with Iraqi children — when the time is right.

“If you can win the kids’ heart by talking to them and maybe giving them something like a piece of candy, you can also win the parents’ hearts as well,” said Talballa. “If you can make their child

happy, the father might decide not to go against you.”

Upon returning from Iraq, Talballa said he wants to pursue attaining American citizenship. After having lived in many different countries and on three different continents, he strongly believes that he is serving the finest country in

the world.

“The Marine Corps, especially the Marines I work with daily, have become my family,” said Talballa. “I want to become a citizen of the United States, and I believe that I can earn it by serving the country that has given me so many opportunities.”

MALS-24 Change of Command



First Lieutenant Juliet N. Barnes

A color guard stands at attention during a change of command ceremony in February during which Lt. Col. Robert Krekel took command of Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 24, here, from Lt. Col. Walter Watson. MALS-24 is the first fully integrated Navy/Marine Corps Intermediate Maintenance Activity within the aviation community. The Warriors of MALS-24 provide maintenance support to the CH-53D Sea Stallion helicopter squadrons, the P-3 Orion aircraft squadron which is assigned to Commander, Patrol and Reconnaissance Wing 2, and the SH-60B Sea Hawk helicopter squadron that is assigned to Commander, Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron (Light) Wing, Pacific.

Before you sit down on another meal oozing with saturated fat, try some food for thought. Think about how all that fat will raise the amount of cholesterol in your blood. Think about thick layers of cholesterol-laden plaque building up along your artery walls. Think about your arteries becoming dangerously congested. Think about the pain of a heart attack. Finally, think about dying. It's enough to make you lose your appetite.

